

LOCAL PROMISING IDEAS AND PRACTICES

Thurston County LPA - Integrated WorkFirst Programs: Through providing WF services in an integrated format, TANF parents receive consistent and positive messages about participation in the WorkFirst program. Here services are provided at the WorkSource through collaboration and leveraging to provide the best services possible in one location. DSHS is on-site with all other partners, which makes it more convenient to maintain engagement with WF parents who are participating in activities onsite. This has also allowed for an "Integrated WorkFirst Orientation" approach, which has allowed for WorkFirst parents to get a better understanding of all the resources available to them as part of the WorkFirst program. All partners participate in the orientation at WorkSource. This has led to a greater consistency of message and information dissemination to WorkFirst parents.

Partners: DSHS, ESD, Pacific Mountain WDC (Community Jobs provider), South Puget Sound Community College
Program Impacts: Consistent and positive message about WF. Increased entered employments.
Resources: Staff and leveraged expertise
Policy Changes: None
Benefits: A much more seamless and efficient way to provide services to TANF families
Contact: Gary Mersereau, WorkFirst Supervisor, WorkSource Thurston County, 360-570-4275

Whatcom County LPA – Co-location of Partners: The Whatcom LPA partners co-locate for many services at the Evergreen Center, which is the facility in which the Community Services Office and DVR reside. Services include TANF case management, job search, CJ case management, CASAS testing, GED pre-testing, DASA and Family Violence services, LEP job search, contracted psychological evaluations, Life Skills curriculum and Dependable Strengths. On the bus line.

Partners: See above
Program Impacts: Increased engagement, program retention and job search to employment entries.
Resources: Investment of time, cost sharing.
Policy Changes: None
Benefits: Better service delivery, client centered
Contact:: Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Bellingham CSOA, LPA Lead, 360-714-4004

South King County LPA – Co-location of DSHS at ESD: ESD WorkFirst created a workstation area for a DSHS point of contact person. ACES was loaded onto a computer for the case manager. This has benefited TANF parents in Job Search by making needed social services available to them while they are at ESD.

Partners: DSHS and ESD (Federal Way)
Program Impacts: Immediate review of the parents case onsite. Issue resolution without time away from Job Search.
Resources: None
Policy Changes: None
Benefits: Saves both DSHS time and ESD staff time and limits disruptions for Job Search while addressing issues.
Contact:: Cathy Swanson, ESD Supervisor, 253-835-2930

Whatcom County LPA - Specialized Case Staffing Models: Whatcom LPA members use a pre-referral staffing model to identify potential referrals for several elements of the WorkFirst program. All potential CJ referrals are discussed in a staffing (held twice a month) between a case manager, a social worker, the CJ provider and ESD. In addition, we use this model for pre-sanction cases and to hold specific case staffing for Lummi cases.

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Whatcom County LPA - Team-Based Case Management:: Core WF partners have assigned staff to work the TANF case load in teams. Each CSO case manager has a assigned caseload based on alphabet. Social workers are assigned matching caseloads, as are ESD job search counselors so that cohesive teams are regularly intersecting with parents in each step of their progress off TANF. These staff are already co-located and physically seated near each other. This makes case staffings very easy and efficient.

Partners: DSHS, ESD, CJ contractor and ESD

Program Impacts: Reduced sanctions, consistently higher participation rates, reduction of Lummi caseload.

Resources: None

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Better service mix for TANF parents, prevention of long-term TANF dependence with earlier intervention of appropriate services.

Contact: Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Bellingham CSOA, LPA Lead, 360-714-4004

Promising Idea - Whatcom County LPA - Bridges Out of Poverty Training: The Whatcom LPA is bringing Philip E. DeVol to Bellingham in February 2006 to deliver his highly regarded "Bridges Out Of Poverty" training to their community. This training will compliment the Dependable Strengths training the Whatcom LPA had last year. The training elements include two sessions on the culture of poverty based on the Ruby Paine work. The overall goal of this training combined with the DS training is to provide a consistent service delivery model for WF families. The cost is \$6000, which is being covered by local partner resources and a small grant from CTED.

Contact: Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Bellingham CSOA, LPA Lead, 360-714-4004

Whatcom County LPA – Dependable Strengths Training: The Whatcom LPA trained staff and implemented the use of DS for TANF parents in 2005. In partnership with the Center for Dependable Strengths, 4 local trainers are in the process of being certified and are providing this highly successful training to WF families. All LPA partners, including the Lummi Tribal Education and Training Center are using the curriculum. The workshop takes 2.5 days and is full-time.

Partners: Lummi tribe, DSHS, ESD, other LPA partners

Program Impacts: Trained over 35 WF staff who are now providing the training to clients.

Resources: None

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Anticipate measurable performance improvements in reducing sanctions and TANF returners and increasing participation rates.

Contact: Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Bellingham CSOA, LPA Lead, 360-714-4004

Kitsap County LPA – Dependable Strengths: The Kitsap County LPA partners were interested in providing Dependable Strengths training to WorkFirst parents as part of a package of "up-front" services prior to Job Search. The intent was to strengthen TANF participation in all activities, including Job Search and to increase overall participation. Kitsap County Resources, the local CJ contractor, provided the DS training. Olympic College staff provided other "soft skills" pieces.

Partners: DSHS, ESD, and KCR, Olympic College

Program Impacts: Increased participation in all activities, provided TANF parents with time to prepare for Job Search based on their strengths.

Resources: None

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Co-located at the CSO so that TANF parents could easily access their case manager while in the program. Exciting program offering for customers.

Contact:: OJ Hogan, KCR Program Manager, 360-698-3250

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South Snohomish County LPA – Front End Job Readiness: The South Snohomish LPA has been working with the Snohomish County Workforce Development Council to provide a package of “front end” services for WF clients prior to Job Search. Included in the package of services is a CASAS test offered by Cascadia Community College or Edmonds Community College plus both Dependable Strengths and a “soft skills” module. The CASAS appraisal is followed by a Learning Disabilities Screening at the CSO

Partners: DSHS, ESD, Cascadia Community College, Edmonds Community College, Service Alternatives, Refugee Forum, Snohomish County WDC, and Housing Hope

Program Impacts: More TANF families are participating in the front end services piece and they are more engaged in WF overall.

Resources: Costs are leveraged with existing resources.

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Better engagement of TANF parents, better retention in programs and anticipated better outcomes.

Contact: Katrina Hall, Cascadia Community College, 360-416-7301

Skagit County LPA – Life Skills Classes: Skagit Valley College is providing a four-week “life skills class” to TANF parents who are in Job Search. This is offered in conjunction with the STEPS training (see STEPS project listed below).

Partners: DSHS, WorkSource Skagit, Skagit County Community Action Agency, Skagit Valley College, Work Now Services and Jim Duffield of Pacific Institute.

Program Impacts: 10% reduction in TANF and Diversion grant expenditures, reduced 2-parent caseload, increase in exits due to self sufficiency.

Resources: Costs are leveraged with WF Block Grant funds.

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Better engagement of TANF parents, better retention in programs and better outcomes.

Contact: Nancy Wolke, Mount Vernon CSO, LPA Lead, 360-416-7301

Skagit County LPA – Steps to Economic and Personal Success (STEPS): The STEPS project was the direct result of the CTED Bridge Grants where funding was made available to “bridge” economic development with WorkFirst. The project centered on the Skagit LPA WorkFirst partners being trained in the Pacific Institutes Steps to Economic and Personal Success curriculum so that they could then provide the program to all WF parents prior to entry into any WF track. The program covered tools for parents to improve their self-talk, motivation, goal setting and achievements.

Partners: DSHS, WorkSource Skagit, Skagit County Community Action Agency, Skagit Valley College, Work Now Services and Jim Duffield of Pacific Institute.

Program Impacts: 10% reduction in TANF and Diversion grant expenditures, reduced 2-parent caseload, increase in exits due to self sufficiency.

Resources: \$76,000 over an 18 month period

Policy Changes: None

Benefits: Better engagement of TANF parents, better retention in programs and better outcomes.

Contact: Nancy Wolke, Mount Vernon CSO, LPA Lead, 360-416-7301